for purchase and Installation of Colour Televisions & Radio-cum-Cassette Players in schools to facilitate reception of such programmes.

Procedural deficiencies in disinvestment of ITDC and HCI

*295. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA : Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the disinvestment from ITDC and Hotel Corporation of India hotels has been held up for certain procedural deficiencies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there is any difference of opinion between his Ministry and Ministry of Finance on the issue;

(d) if so, why the same could not be sorted out before approving the proposal for disinvestment in hotels; and

(e) by when, notices inviting tenders for disinvestment in hotels are likely to be issued?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY) : (a) to (e) Sir, there are no procedural deficiencies in the disinvestment of ITDC and Hotel Corporation of India hotels. There is also no difference of opinion between the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Disinvestment. The position about inviting tenders for disinvestment in hotels of ITDC and Hotel Corporation of India is given as under :

India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC)

Expressions of Interest were invited for 17 hotels (8 in the 1st tranche & 9 in the 2nd tranche). After due diligence by the qualified parties and finalization of transaction documents, financial bids were invited for the 8 hotels advertised in the 1st tranche. No bids/complaint bids were received for two hotels and in respect of the remaining 6 hotels, 8 bids in all were received and the respective highest bids in each of the 6 hotels have been accepted by Government. The bids in respect of the 9 hotels advertised in the 2nd tranche are yet to be invited. In respect of the remaining hotels, the advertisement inviting Expression of Interest is yet to be issued

Hotel Corporation of India

A sub-committee was constituted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to oversee the process of disinvestment of HCI and a Global Advisor was appointed

by Air India for the purpose. The Government later decided to have the process of disinvestment in HCI completed by the Ministry of Disinvestment Financial bids were invited from the bidders for HCI properties (other than Centaur Lake View, Srinagar) and after scrutiny & examination, the Government has accepted the bids in respect of two hotels. The other properties (except Srinagar) for which either the bids were below reserve price or no bid was received, further action to re-invite bids would be taken in due course. Regarding Hotel Centaur Lake View, Srinagar, some issues are yet to be resolved with Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

Deaths due to smoking

*296. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN:—Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more than three million people die every year in the country as a result of smoking tobacco and Supreme Court ban on public smoking is a welcome sign;

(b) how Government propose to implement this ban and whether the existing agencies suffice to enforce this ban or some specific task force is being created for effective implementation of ban and monitoring thereof; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR) : (a) to (c) The Government considers smoking as one of the major public health hazards which is responsible directly or indirectly for substantial deaths in the country. As per the community-based survey in India, it is estimated that eight lakh deaths per year could be attributable to tobacco use. The Supreme Court, in its order passed on 2nd November, 2001 prohibited smoking in public places and issued directions to the Union of India, State Governments as well as the Union Territories to take effective steps to ensure prohibiting smoking in public places.

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare issued letters to all the State Governments and Union Territories to give wide publicity to the orders of the Supreme Court and take steps to prohibit smoking in public places. An advertisement has also been issued in leading newspapers by the Government informing the general public of the orders of the Court. To discourage use of tobacco products, a comprehensive Bill, namely, " The Cigarettes and other